miting the claims of two branches of the royal house. In 1370, -K)uis succeeded his maternal uncle, Casimir III, as King of [3]oland. To the Italians, who had seen the vengeance he had aken for his brother, and the stern justice with which he repressed he excesses of his own troops in Naples, he seemed a possible rbiter of the nation's destinies, more formidable than the imperor himself. In their eyes, he was hardly more a foreigner han Queen Giovanna or the Visconti of Milan. It will seem »erfectly natural to the Republic of Florence to appeal to him gainst the Pope, and to Catherine of Siena herself to look to him s the champion and defender of the Church.

Between despot-ridden north and feudal south lay the Republics of Tuscany and the nominal States of the Church.

And here the great Guelf Republic of Florence was still the iominant power. Excluded from the government by the famous)rdinances of Justice in 1293, the nobles (magnates or *grandi}* ad been finally broken in the tremendous street battles of 1343. The power was mainly in the hands of the wealthy burghers, *opolani grassi,* members of the greater Guilds; but the smaller radesmen and artisans, forming the minor Guilds, were gradually oming to the front, and sharing in the administration. And umblings of social discontent, sounds from a still lower stratum f society, were being heard in the background. The supreme lagistracy of the Republic, the Signoria, consisted of the Gonfa-Dniere of Justice and eight Priors of the Arts (instead of the six i Dante's days), two from each quarter of the city. These *'ignori* held office for two months ; their nomination was by lot, nd was controlled by a complicated process of scrutiny. Next ame the two " Colleges," that is, the twelve *Buonuomini,* who 7ere the counsellors of the Signoria, and the sixteen *Gonfalonieri f* the city companies, four from each quarter. All magnates, whether by birth or declared so as penalty, were excluded from he Signoria and the Colleges, whose members were all *fopolani,* Florentine burghers and artisans, ascribed to the greater or minor

or Guilds. The executive, as in almost all Italian States of the epoch, was